

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

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FM AMCONSUL QUEBEC
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 1458
INFO AMEMBASSY OTTAWA PRIORITY
AMCONSUL MONTREAL PRIORITY

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EO 11652: NA
TAGS: PINT, CA
SUBJ: RYAN REACHES FIRST

REF: MONTREAL 1783

1. FROM QUEBEC PERSPECTIVE, PROVINCIAL LIBERAL PARTY GENERAL COUNCIL MEETING REPORTED IN REFTEL APPEARS TO BE MAJOR MILESTONE IN CLAUDE RYAN'S EFFORTS TO TRANSFORM THE LIBERAL PARTY FROM A DISPIRITED, SCANDAL-RIDDEN, BOSS-CONTROLLED LOSER INTO A TIGHTLY ORGANIZED, DEDICATED POLITICAL INSTRUMENT CAPABLE OF MOBILIZING POPULAR SUPPORT FOR THE FEDERALIST IDEAL (ALBEIT IN ATTENUATED FORM) AND AGAINST SEPARATISM. THE ECLIPSE OF MANY OF THE OLD BOSSES, SUCH AS PAUL DESROCHERS, AND THE RISE OF A NEW AND REJUVENATED LEADERSHIP AT THE CONSTITUENCY LEVEL IS AN IMPRESSIVE ACCOMPLISHMENT TO CROWN RYAN'S INITIAL SIX MONTHS AS PARTY LEADER.

2. NEXT TEST OF EFFICACY OF MACHINE RYAN HAS BUILT, AS WELL AS ITS SHAKEDOWN CRUISE, WILL BE FUND-RAISING DRIVE TO BE LAUNCHED OCTOBER 10 WITH OFFICIAL OBJECTIVE OF DOLS 1,250,000. (ALTHOUGH RYAN WOULD BE HAPPY TO REACH THAT OBJECTIVE, THE REAL

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TARGET IS TO MATCH OR EXCEED THE DOLS 2,000,000 RAISED BY THE PARTI QUEBECOIS IN THEIR LAST FUND DRIVE.) GONE ARE THE DAYS WHEN BIG CORPORATE AND SPECIAL INTEREST DONATIONS WOULD AUTOMATICALLY SWELL LIBERAL COFFERS. ELECTORAL REFORM AND THE REFERENDUM LEGISLATION NOW LIMIT MAXIMUM CONTRIBUTIONS AND EXCLUDE DIRECT CORPORATE PAYMENTS TO CAMPAIGN CHESTS. THIS FORCES PARTIES TO ORGANIZE MASS BASE SUFFICIENTLY MOTIVATED

TO BACK CONVICTIONS WITH CASH. IN A SENSE, PQ LEGISLATION HAS MADE RYAN'S JOB EASIER BY FORCING LIBERALS TO FORM AN EFFICIENT GRASS ROOTS ORGANIZATION CAPABLE OF MOBILIZING THE NECESSARY SUPPORT.

3. IT SHOULD SURPRISE NO ONE THAT RYAN'S EFFORTS TO NUANCE HIS POLITICAL POSITION BY TAKING STANDS CRITICAL OF OTTAWA AND APPEARING TO FAVOR THE PQ HAVE DRAWN POLITE CRITICISM FROM PARTY MILITANTS. RENE LEVESQUE HAS SIMILAR DIFFICULTIES WITH HIS OWN MILITANTS WHEN HE ATTEMPTS TO GAIN TACTICAL ADVANTAGE THROUGH POLITICAL MANEUVERS WHICH AROUSE FEARS OF COMPROMISE OF PRINCIPLE AMONG DEDICATED MILITANTS. THIS PROBLEM IS COMMON IN POLITICAL PARTIES OF THE "MOBILIZING" TYPE WHEN THEY ATTEMPT TO BROADEN ELECTORAL SUPPORT BY SOFTENING OR BY INTRODUCING AMBIGUITY IN THEIR PROGRAMS. RECENT EXPERIENCE OF COMMUNIST PARTIES IN ITALY AND FRANCE IS A CASE IN POINT.

4. QUEBEC POLITICAL LEADERS ARE ENGAGED IN AN IDEOLOGICAL BATTLE WHICH TRANSCENDS ORDINARY ELECTORAL POLITICS. THUS, THEIR PUBLIC STATEMENTS AND ACTIONS ARE JUDGED NOT ONLY FOR THEIR ELECTORAL EFFICACY BUT ALSO FOR IDEOLOGICAL PURITY. TO RYAN'S GOOD FORTUNE, HIS CRITICS ARE UNLIKELY TO BE AS STRIDENT OR AS STRINGENT AS ARE LEVESQUE'S. AFTER ALL, WHO IS GOING TO SERIOUSLY CHALLENGE MOSES FROM IN THE MIDDLE OF THE RED SEA? (SEE QUEBEC 0046 FOR AN ASSESSMENT LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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OF RYAN'S LEADERSHIP POTENTIAL.)
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